

Kwon InKyung was born in Seoul in 1979. After a degree in Oriental Painting from **Hongik University** in Seoul she completed her academic journey with a Ph.D. in the same department.

Kwon InKyung reinterprets the tradition of landscape painting through a new chromatic sensitivity and a personal vision of space. Her environments appear as unreal, extraordinary scenarios, not explainable through logic or reason. Characterized by distorted perspectives, she combines elements such as houses, rocks, mountains, and paved roads in original compositions. In some works, domestic furnishings are also integrated into the landscape, suggesting glimpses observed through windows.

By adopting the technique of collage, the artist overlaps different layers of pages from ancient books, where the memories of the inhabitants intertwine and coexist within the urban space.

The study of classical **Chinese philosophy** represents a fundamental foundation for **Kwon InKyung** who integrates textual fragments within everyday environments. A spatial organization that echoes the «impossible constructions» of the Dutch artist **Maurits Cornelis Escher** and a sense of color not far from the tonal richness characteristic of **Henri Matisse**.



Kwon InKyung, an open window, 135x197cm, ancient book collage, ink and acrylic on hanji, 2023

Kwon InKyung

Born in 1979 Seoul, South Korea



«In her works, dreams, unconsciousness and madness make a very strong flow but we cannot be sure that what directions they are going to take. They seem to comply with gravity but keep afloat like the planet earth in the space filled with blue. Vague but strong, it seems to have similarity with art and must be a choice heading for nature not for consciousness, reason or civilization..»

Lee Seon Young
(Art critic)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024-2025** *Ordinary World*, Centre Culturel Coréen, **Paris, France**
- 2021** *Seeking: Looking for Beopcheon river*, Daedeok culture center, **Daejeon, South Korea**
- 2020** *The artist's view of cultural heritage*, Jungmyeongjeon Hall of Deoksugung Palace, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2019** *Scented shadow*, Sonoart, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2016** *Floating Cloud*, The ballery Gallery, **Berlin, Germany**
- 2015** *The Seoul-Mecenat Matching Fund*, Gallery Grimson, Gahoedong 60, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2014** *Art and Ideals-Pursuit of Ideals in Contemporary Art'- Planned and Invited Exhibition (Ewha Womans University Museum*, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2013** *Beyond Korean Painting*, Bukseoul Museum of Art, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2011** *Space and View -The 1st 63 Sky Art Museum New Artist project*, 63 Sky Art Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
- 2010** *Asia Top Gallery Hotel Art Fair HK 2010*, Grand HYATT, **Hong Kong, China**
- 2009** *Hi! Gangwon province, Nice Meeting you Yanggu'*, Park soo Keun Museum in Yanggu,, **Gangwon-do, South Korea**
- 2008** *55's Contemporary artists exhibition-Selected by Critics*, **Seoul Arts Center, Seoul**
- 2007** *My private collection Exhibition*, Gana art center, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2006** *Eastern New Image Exhibition China Central of Academy of Fine Arts*, **Beijing, China**
- 2005** *La jeune création coréenne*, Galerie Etienne de Causans, **Paris, France**
- 2003** *"REAL-SCAPE Revisited"*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, **Geonggi-do, South Korea**

PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 2018** *Revisited Memories At last*, Gallery meme, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2016** *Memory of place-Young cube project*, Gallery meme, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2015** *Imagined memories*, Gallery Artbn, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2013** *Heart-Land*, Gallery Grimson, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2011** *City-The Landscape*, Gana art space, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2009** *City-Ephemeral eternity*, Gallery Is **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2006** *City-Change and Reflection*, Munhwa Gallery, **Seoul, South Korea**
- 2005** *City-A daily life*, Gongpyeong Art Center, **Seoul, South Korea**

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Art Bank of National Museum of Contemporary Art

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dubai consulate general of the Republic of Korea

Seoul Eastern District Prosecutor's Office

«My work appears static by superimposing ancient book collages, ink lines, and coloring from various perspectives within a single screen, yet it depicts the city as it lies in time with simultaneous and constant changes and the psychological situations of human beings coexisting within the spaces of such a city. Recently, I have been working on objects that stem from memories and situations involving people being in a particular place.»

- Kwon In Kyung Artist Note, 2024

*I am Kwon In Kyung, a painter who works on private rooms, places, and spaces.»

- Interview with Kwon In Kyung, Yoon Gi Won's Artist Talk EP. 186 on Gongshall TV, YouTube, February 27, 2025.

I don't know why. I have always considered Kwon In Kyung to be an artist who paints «urban landscapes.» When I hear her name, the first word that comes to mind is «city,» and when I introduce her to someone, unquestioningly describe her as an «artist who paints cities.» Well, in retrospect, I was not entirely wrong. When we explain this artist, who has established her own form by combining the traditional oriental painting technique of coloring on jangji paper with the unique method of ancient book collage, using typical «modern cityscape» filled with tower blocks and high-rise apartments as her subject matter, it would have been rather strange not to mention city and landscape. However, defining Kwon In Kyung as an «artist who paints cityscapes» is the result of not fully, and not adequately understanding her and her work. Indeed, her work features cities and landscapes. However, her choice is not based on the significance of these elements; they were just there. The artist, who seemed to be interested in herself and her surroundings and also seeking a better understanding of her existence, daily routine, and life itself, may first have turned her gaze to the place she was/is, the site she occupied/occupies, and the «space» in which she existed/exists. For the artist, who was born and raised in the city, especially spending her childhood and adolescence in the first generation of large apartment complexes in Seoul, the first thing that was engraved in her visual memory should be the cityscape of Seoul, which is densely populated with apartment buildings. In fact, a city is not only made up of tower blocks. Even though we had already passed a quarter of the 21st century after the end of the 20th century, when 'development' was considered one of the highest values, the symbols of modern cities and their growth and wealth are still high-rise architectures and tower blocks that soar into the



Kwon In Kyung, *The story of a certain day 3*, Encre de Chine, acrylique et collage de livres anciens sur papier coréen, 26.1 x 18.1 cm



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sky, However, the definition of a city cannot be simply determined by whether it has tower blocks or not. The reason Kwon In Kyung nevertheless represented the cityscape through a dense cluster of high-rise apartments and tower blocks is that they were actually the prevalent backdrop that surrounded her in the places and spaces she desired to depict, In other words, for Kwon In Kyung, such a «cityscape» was a means and tool that helped her grasp her surroundings. Often, «painting a cityscape densely populated with high-rise buildings and apartments» tends to entail the typical interpretation of «demonstrating and denouncing the dreary modern society.» Although less flagrant now than in the past, people still consider apartment complexes and cities (more so than the countryside) as places where residents are selfish and heartless. Selfish and heartless behaviors are often associated with high-rise apartment residents in cities, especially upscale apartment complexes in southern Seoul: not knowing who lives next door, not allowing delivery workers to use the elevator because it creates inconvenience for the residents, and restricting children from other neighborhoods from using the playground in the apartment complex and so on. However, the high-rise apartment complexes in Kwon In Kyung's memory are not such places. Although they are not as friendly as rural neighborhoods where they know their neighbors down to the number of spoons in their kitchen (I also think the distinction between urban and rural life, between Seoul and the provinces, is no longer relevant), in the apartment complex where she grew up, she felt pretty enough cordiality and warmth between neighbors. For her, the words «city,»

«apartment,» and «tower block» do not evoke negative connotations. She regards cities, apartments, and tower blocks simply as the environments she has naturally seen and experienced since her childhood, the surroundings she remembers and reminisces about, and also the present setting in which she currently lives. It is just the same perception that mountains and rice paddies are natural surroundings for people who grew up and live in the countryside.

This is even more evident when listening to her explanation of why she paints cityscapes and makes collages of ancient books. As she desired to include not only her own story but also the stories of many others who saw and experienced the city in her works on the city she has seen and experienced in person, she uses her own method of cutting and pasting «ancient books» that contain the stories of people in the past, in order to embody those stories and their times in her cityscape. The cityscape, densely populated with tower blocks and apartments, which for some may be a symbol of a heartless modern society, becomes a warm and «humane» space for Kwon In Kyung, conveying the stories of many people, memories, and reminiscences that linger between the past and the present, In this way, she may capture the stories of others in the cityscape.

Then, one day, Kwon In Kyung's gaze began to focus on the inside of the apartment. I thought she was a cityscape painter, but suddenly, an interior scene began to appear in her frame.

Someone's living room, bedroom, and study untold on her painting, She used to paint the entire city, with its towering buildings, from a bird's-eye view, but then she began to concentrate on one wall of the apartment, observing and painting the scenery of each household behind the wall. I presume that she wanted to say that although the houses are like monotone matchboxes, each one contains an individual and private life. The titles of the works also reveal her new focus on private spaces, such as *The Private Room* (2012), *The Other's Room* (2016), *Me and Their Room* (2020, installation), and *Someone's Room* (2020, installation). On the other hand, titles such as *Imagined Memories* (2015), *Forgotten Memory* (2018), and *Revisited Memory at Last* (2018) imply that the artist tells the stories of other people in a «room,» which is their private space, concentrating on their memories and reminiscences as if they were her own, crossing the borderline between memory and room, here and there, reality and imagination. *Revisited Memory at Last* brings out *Untold Stories* (2022), and *The Private Room - An Added Memory* (2022) also emerges

from the revisited memory. Kwon In Kyung, who seemed to be hovering around a particular «story,» moving between her own and others', went deeper inside, one step at a time. Only then did I realize that the theme of Kwon In Kyung was not «city» but «space.» She had been looking at [viewing] the city, the space where her place is, looking at observing the apartment she lives in, looking at [observing] the space of the people who live in an apartment like her, and now she began to enter the space herself and explore it one by one. Who opened the door for her? Would she have snuck in? How was it ever possible for her to enter someone else's room (space), to look around, observe, and experience it? The room that Kwon In Kyung was able to enter and then see after having come full circle was actually her own room. The room that used to be locked, the door closed. where she could not enter and faced hidden stories, was, in fact, not anyone else's room but her own. Otherwise, it would be more accurate to say that it was her own room that she faced in someone else's room. How could this happen?



Kwon In Kyung, *A memory that comes to mind 1*, 2025, encre de Chine, acrylique et collage de livres anciens sur papier coréen, 30 x 60 cm

In Kyung KWON consistently paints cities. Since her first solo exhibition in 2005 until 2021, city has been a recurring subject matter and a theme in her work. For being born and grow up in the city where she still resides, the symbol of modern cities, skyscrapers and high-rise apartments, is probably an inevitable subject matter. What makes her city special is that skyscrapers, the strong modern and western symbols, are depicted with oriental materials, Chinese ink, and western ones, acrylic, applied together. Differentiating the two does not mean much nowadays, however, looking at Chinese ink and acrylic paints together on both Korean paper and canvas with Chinese paint brush is somewhat unfamiliar and fascinating. In addition to this, Kwon with the basis of oriental materials and techniques brings collages into her painting that rarely happens in one work. Collage is one of modern art techniques started in the early 20th century with Cubists like Picasso and Braque's cutting and pasting printed papers or newspapers called papier collé. She adds time and narrative to her work by tearing and pasting old books to her cities. To a question of why she, with Oriental painting background, incorporates collages to her painting, she says she moves beyond merely portraying the look of cities and rather adds everyday life, stories and time spent by someone. That is why she bothers purchase old books to find trivial stories, in particular. Perhaps that is why her urban landscape contains the scent of humans who occupy buildings in her work, just not visibly portrayed. Her landscape is very metropolitan and sophisticated but somewhat crude and friendly. It contains the artist's sincere affection toward the city from her history of a long residence and memories from her experience within, along with her genuine gesture to encompass other people's stories.

Kwon's interest and love toward the city manifest itself through the titles of her solo exhibitions: City_Daily Life (2005), City_Change and Reflection (2006), City_Coexistence of Time (2007), City_Ephemeral Eternity (2009), Cityscape with View and Retirement, (2011). The subtitles under the main title, «City, reveal her attitude and view toward them. She has developed Seoul's cityscape, full of high-rise apartments and skyscrapers, with diverse composition and techniques. In her city exist only buildings, join streams, and later appear trees and forests. She focuses on the verticality of urban structures in earlier work which evolved into views that look down from the top or up from a



Kwon In Kyung, A memory that comes to mind 5, 2025, encre de Chine, acrylique et collage de livres anciens sur papier coréen, 30 x 60 cm

reclining position. In Heart-Land (2013), her city embodies the look of old highland surrounded by water and mountains in the center of the picture plane. Now the actual landscape transforms into the imaginary utopia, the center of the self, and a fortress where one can be protected. The subject matter no longer reveals 'city. Her interest moves from the city's outer look to its inner spaces, the places people occupy: inside a house and a room, to its core, Heart-Land.

Then the artist's attention moves to traces of humans layered gradually and to memories derived from experiences within. She still paints the city and its components like houses and rooms; yet she focuses on our memories piled within. Thus, came Imagine Memories (2015), and followed by Revisited Memories at Last (2018). The city created by the space of others' and my own, we organically stay together or parted, and sometimes occupy to desperately make it personal. We live in the same time and space that influence one another yet try to stay undisturbed to coexist. She illustrates the city through her own experience and memories harvested from all these occurrences. Then, today she shows a new body of work under somewhat unexpected title, Practicing Patience__ Sigmoid Curve (2021). What she had in mind while making the new work was an inflection point. She is diligent and has a pace of her own; she has majored in Oriental paintings and received BFA, MFA, and PhD, actively works as a studio artist and an instructor, be awarded to numerous open calls for shows and grants, and has had solo shows almost annually in addition to many selected group shows simultaneously. The icon of passion and a hard worker whom I thought is on a good pace abruptly talks about practicing patience. What has happened to her? No wonder why she is drained out. She was advancing step by step but to where she did not mean to nor at a pace of her wish. Sometimes, she arrived at the wrong place. When we realize we end up at the unintended place after our best trial, we stumble. Or unexpected damage hits us hard to make us fall. Nevertheless, how we respond at the time of the unexpected is more important, It is not the end of life. We just shake things off and get up. We shall look back and front from where we fall and just move on. There is no point in being upset even if we head to somewhere different. We just steer our wheel to move to where we want, It could take a long time looking back or not look back at all. Anyhow, we are going to proceed. In the course of life that we make choices within a given time and space, the artist says we shall move on when we fall even numerous times which is represented through Sigmoid Curve illustrating an organism's growth in S curve line. For Kwon, the year 2020 has been the new starting point. After graduation, she became a part of an institution where she makes works, teaches students, and is provided with a basis for stable studio practice. Stability is surely a blessing but comes with obligations and responsibilities. Adapting to a new workplace is interesting yet challenging. Of course, all those changes influence the artist's work that new stories and styles have arisen from her work. From several years ago, she has been experimenting in search of new styles, in fact. She learned graphic tools to make video work and installation works in 2018. Started from the exterior of the city, she slowly moved inside houses and rooms to depict and then now focuses on mountains, forests, and trees that surround the city, and also plants in a domestic space. Her subject matter evolved from building structures to natural landscape embracing greens and waters. However, the city is still her interest. The artist who used to move only forward now takes a break at where she falls and has grown to look around. She no longer tries to embrace other people's time in her painting. One work is collage using old book pages while the other one is solely a painting. She experiments at her enjoyment. She is totally immersed in the pleasure of painting. The new position that requires responsibility and obligation unrelated to art has brought her new stimuli and thus affection toward the work. For her, who had always been not sure of changes and challenges, the new working environment allowed her a place to fall, take a deep breath, and stand back again. Then

we witness to assure through her show, Practicing Patience_ Sigmoid Curve (2021), that she stands strong and heads toward a new destination. At a glance, Kwon's new body of work seems to undergo significant changes, yet her works, Practicing Patience, Sigmoid Curve, Unintentional, Blooming Gab, New Season, and Splendid Fall have not lost its energy and layers and rather fill our eyes and minds satisfied and peaceful. Practicing Patience_ Sigmoid Curve (2021) firmly and strongly foreshows the artist's glittering new era.

One's «room» is a space that feels too alien and unwelcoming to outsiders; and yet, it exists as an absolute space in and of itself for those who live there. Your «room»-a genuinely private space-is allowed only for family and close friends, as it is where your life becomes evidently visible.

Georges Perec, the author of *Species of Spaces*, noted that the function of a room as space is similar to that of Proust's madeleine. According to Perec, the «resurrected space of the bedroom» recalls the memories that were once deemed hidden and forgotten. In the room where I spent a lot of time, all the details of the room unfold even if I close my eyes: props by the bedside, posters on the wall, vases of withered flowers, people seared in my memory, the gifts they gave, the feelings, smells, and the scenes I experienced on those days. Everything in a room has memories attached to it, so long-forgotten memories occasionally resurface. The crumpled letters inside the drawer bring back painful memories, and the magazine scraps stuck between the bookshelves remind me of my past obsessions.

You can also daydream about any ideal and create new ideas and syntax in your room. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* tells the story of Jane Austen, who wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.

She wrote in her room when women writers were not accepted imagining the world to be the other way around. In her tiny personal universe called home, she told a tale headed for the world. She was particularly fond of the sound the door hinges made because it gave her time to hide her manuscripts when someone tried to come in and made a squeaky noise. She dreamed of a different world in her room, adding layers of existing memories as she envisioned it.

In their rooms, people create green-covered botanical gardens and retro-styled spaces filled with cherished memories. Even within the same structure, people who live there blur the lines between reality and fantasy to transform the place into a completely different space they desire. That is, it becomes a non-existent place unless it is for the person who resides.

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